

CRICKLEWOOD AND RADLETT

"Flight's" Camera Makes a Brief Tour of the Handley Page Works and Hangars

AT one time almost all the aircraft constructors owned airfields adjacent to their factories. A number of these airfields have, however, now been swallowed up in the continual growth of Britain's larger cities. Handley Page have suffered in this way and now their main factory is at Cricklewood and their airfield at Radlett.

As may be imagined, this has had a considerable effect on production plans but, strangely enough, the effect has been entirely beneficial.

To meet the need to transport large aircraft to the final erecting shops at Radlett, and at the same time solve the two problems of economical semi-mass production and lack of skilled labour, Mr. J. Hamilton, director and works manager of Handley Page, has evolved a brilliant system of sub-assembly construction. This enables the minimum number of jigs to be used and gives the workpeople plenty of elbow-room to get at their tasks.

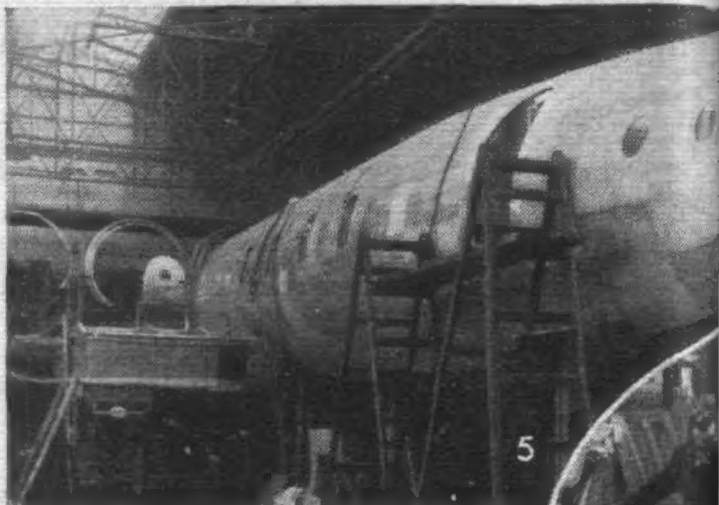
The Hastings fuselage, for instance, is made in three sections, each of which is built-up round the appropriate piece of flooring. Using no jigs, the circular frames and stringers are put together and appear in the semi-finished state as a piece of metal basketwork. At this stage the structure is still quite flexible and the pick-up points are all easily adjusted when the section is put in a jig for plating.

A jig is occupied only for the few hours necessary to do the plating. The sections are then wheeled out of the jigs and taken away to receive their internal fittings—many of which are already in sub-assembly form. As each completed section becomes ready for painting it is sealed, with the exception of controlled air inlets and exhaust trunks, and is virtually turned into a paint shop itself.

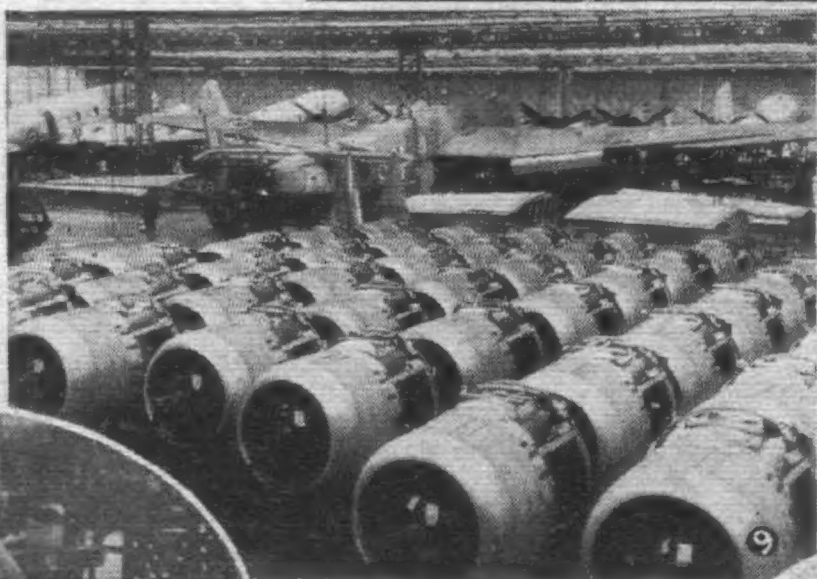
Finally the sections are transported by road to Radlett where they are finally assembled and the aircraft test-flown before being handed over to the R.A.F.



1. Mr. J. Hamilton supervises the use of a centrescope in jig boring. The drilling marks are laid out photographically in the lofting room.



5. The Hermes mock-up is nearing completion.



9. A store of Bristol Hercules engines waiting to be installed in Handley Page Hastings.

11. One of the four-bladed Rotol airscrews with cooling fan ready to be fitted to a Hercules.

10. The finished product. A Hastings having its initial engine run on the tarmac at Radlett.



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